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PREFACE.

The following monograph, originally prepared as a dissertation, is presented with a good deal of diffidence to a wider public. Sir William Petty seems to merit more attention than he has hitherto received. An ordinary student must generally content himself with the few pages devoted to him by Roscher or by Cunningham. What has here been done is designed to give a fuller account than can at present be found elsewhere, with the hope of calling forth in the future a more satisfactory work than this can pretend to be. The reason for the space given up to Petty's biography may not be very apparent. It is believed that it will be found to throw some light on his writings. Petty was no *littérateur*. His own experience and career supplied him with the material of his "Tracts." I wish here, as I have had no opportunity in the work itself, to express my great obligations to my honored friend, Professor Brentano, of the University of Munich. Without implying any responsibility on his part, it can with truth be said that, without his direction and encouragement, this essay would not have been undertaken or completed. It is pleasant for me here to record that a kind word from Professor Cossa, of Pavia, well known for his tenderness towards youthful work, induced me to think of republishing what seemed to me too imperfect even to offer as a short-lived contribution to a neglected field of study.

W. L. B.

CONCORD, MASS.,
September, 1894.